

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFR #1206/01 2461531
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 031531Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7086
INFO RUEHXX/IO MISSION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001206

SIPDIS

WASHINGTON FOR IO/MRP, IO/UNESCO,
IO/UNP, EUR/WA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/03/2029
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KUNR](#) [AORC](#) [APER](#) [KAWC](#) [UNGA](#) [UNGA](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES FM KOUCHNER ON UNESCO DG RACE

REF: A. STATE 90809
[B. STATE 82701](#)
[C. PARIS 961](#)
[D. PARIS 1137](#)

Classified By: Ambassador Charles H. Rivkin, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: Embassy Paris continued its on-going engagement with France on the UNESCO Director General race. The Ambassador raised it forcefully in a September 2 meeting with FM Kouchner, in which he urged the French to actively engage on preventing the election of Hosni and to help build a consensus for a better candidate. Kouchner told the Ambassador that Egyptian candidate Farouk Hosni is "totally inappropriate" for this position and the FM was "resolved to help." Kouchner pledged "full French support." DCM, Pol MC, POL/C and Poloff also made demarches to other counterparts, one of whom told us that Presidential advisor Henri Guaino leads the Elysee opposition to any change in French neutrality on the campaign for a new UNESCO DG. Hosni has reportedly established himself in Paris to continue campaigning. End Summary

[1](#)2. (C/NF) The Ambassador opened Richard Holbrooke's September 2 meeting with Kouchner by forcefully delivering the guidance in Ref A (STATE 90809), urging the French to actively engage on preventing the election of Egyptian candidate Farouk Hosni and help build a consensus for a better candidate. Specifically, he urged France to work with African countries, as well as all the other voting members. Kouchner said, "I don't like Hosni at all. He's an anti-Semite, the wrong person, and totally inappropriate for the job . . . I hear you loud and clear . . . we are on your side, and we will help." Kouchner added, "Hosni will not win in the first round, and we will engage in a campaign to defeat him in subsequent ballots." Kouchner said there are many qualified candidates, including "our favorite" Benita Ferrero-Waldner. The French want a European DG, he said. Kouchner also said his resolve on this issue cannot be questioned; he pledged "full French support."

[1](#)3. (C/NF) DCM Pekala delivered these points to Catherine Colonna, France's Representative to UNESCO, on Sept 1. Colonna strongly urged the U.S. to be very clear and forceful with other voting members, adding that many countries did not understand that the U.S. position was unambiguous. PolMinCouns presented our position to Phillipe Bertoux, FM Kouchner's Chief of Staff who opined that it was likely too late to mount a campaign against Hosni, given the apparent agreement Egypt struck with Israel to end its campaign against Hosni. Bertoux also thought the U.S. effort in favor of a different candidate was begun too late. Poloff delivered a series of demarches to Olivier Guerot, recently arrived Deputy Director for Human Rights at the Direction of United Nations and International Organizations at MFA and Emmanuel Cocher, the MFA's recently-arrived DAS-equivalent

for United Nations institutional issues.

¶4. (C/NF) PolCouns delivered the points to Marc Giacomini, MFA's DAS-equivalent UN and International Organizations. Giacomini said France shares our concerns about the appropriateness of Hosni to be the new UNESCO Director-General, but is unable to engage proactively with other countries on the race because of President Sarkozy's promise to President Mubarak to not oppose Hosni. Giacomini (please protect) indicated there are differences between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency (Elysee) on this issue. Indeed even within the Elysee, there are differences between National Security Advisor Jean-David Levitte who recognizes the problems posed by Hosni and Senior Advisor to Sarkozy Henri Guaino. Giacomini said Levitte is convinced that Hosni is not the right candidate, but Guaino believes France cannot risk other important French-Egyptian relations by acting against the Hosni candidacy. Giacomini said it would be "difficult" to proactively engage with African countries or others in the Francophone world but "it is another story" should French officials be approached by others for consultations on the matter. Giacomini also said the European Union will likely attempt to impose discipline on member states to support a common candidate after the first round. He asked what message the U.S. was sharing with Cairo on Hosni candidacy.

¶5. (U) According to the September 3 Le Figaro, Farouk Hosni is now in Paris where he plans to remain and continue campaigning until the election is concluded.

¶6. (C/NF) Comment: We have heard from several interlocutors over the past year that there are differences between the Elysee and the MFA and even within in the Elysee. Kouchner's statements were clear and unambiguous. However, Guaino is an influential advisor to President Sarkozy. Often referred to as "la plume," he has penned many of Sarkozy's speeches. He is reportedly the architect of the Union for the Mediterranean, which is co-chaired by Sarkozy and Mubarak. An article on the UNESCO DG issue published September 1 in the French daily LeMonde recounts much of the history and paints Guaino as responsible for an Egyptian rebuttal to allegations by leading intellectuals (LeMonde, May 2009) accusing Hosni of anti-Semitism. MFA official Giacomini (protect) commented that much of the LeMonde article was accurate. Embassy will continue to engage. End comment.

RIVKIN